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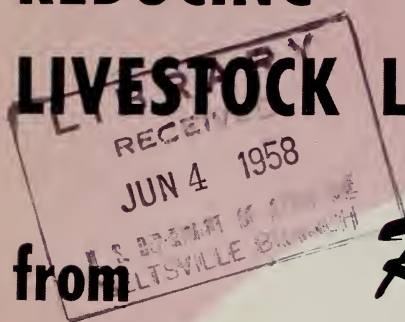


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# REDUCING LIVESTOCK LOSSES

from



## *Rubberweed* POISONING

in the  
Western States



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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

# REDUCING LIVESTOCK LOSSES

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## Rubberweed POISONING

### in the Western States

Rubberweed<sup>1</sup> may cause serious livestock losses on overgrazed ranges in the summer and in the fall. Losses may also occur when hungry animals are trailed through rubberweed from summer ranges.

Poisoning occurs commonly in sheep and only occasionally in cattle.

The toxic substance, which is contained in the aboveground portions of the plant, has a cumulative effect.

### Where and When It Grows

Rubberweed grows in dry soils at elevations of 5,000 to 8,000 feet. It is found mostly on mountains and

foothills, and is poisonous to livestock throughout the growing season.

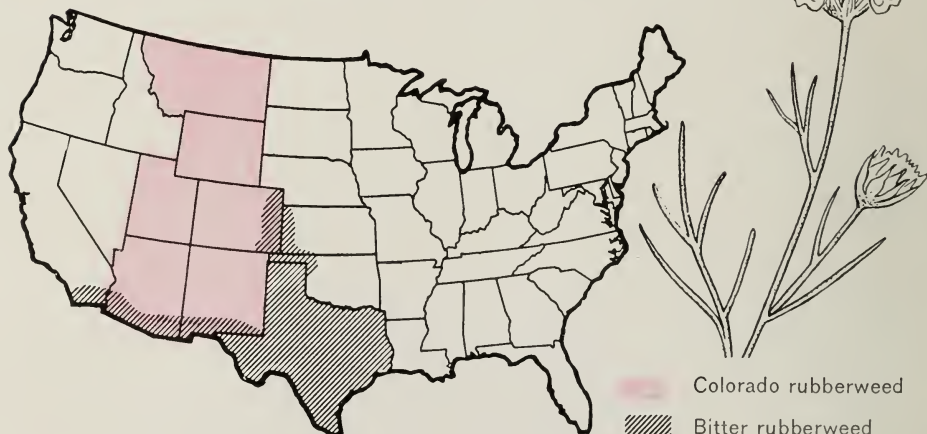
### How It Affects Livestock

A 100-pound sheep may die if it eats  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound of rubberweed daily for 2 to 4 weeks. An animal

may die from one large feeding or repeatedly eating small quantities of the plant over a long period.

<sup>1</sup> Other common names are pingue, Colorado rubberweed, and bitter rubberweed. Two species are most poisonous to livestock: *Hymenoxys richardsoni* (*Actinea richardsoni*) and *H. odorata* (*A. odorata*).

### DISTRIBUTION OF RUBBERWEED



Plant sketch from W. C. Muenscher, Poisonous Plants of the United States, The MacMillan Company, 1951





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Rubberweed is a small, bushy plant, about 1 foot tall, that grows from a thick, woody stalk. The bases of the stems are covered with a woolly growth. The flowers are asterlike and golden yellow or orange. The plant is a perennial and belongs to the sunflower family. It is called rubberweed because it contains a small amount of rubber.

## BITTER RUBBERWEED

Bitter rubberweed, or bitterweed (its scientific name is *Actinea odorata*), is a small annual plant that is related to pingue. Bitter rubberweed and pingue produce similar effects on sheep that feed on them.

Bitter rubberweed is found from southwestern Kansas and central Texas westward across southern New Mexico and southern Arizona to southeastern California. It has caused severe sheep losses in the Edwards Plateau region of Texas.

### Symptoms of rubberweed poisoning

1. Depression
2. Weakness
3. Vomiting
4. Bloating
5. Frothing at the mouth
6. Green discharge from the nose

### How To Reduce Livestock Losses

*Animals will seldom eat toxic amounts of rubberweed if desirable forage is available.* Heavy losses may be prevented, especially during trailing, by avoiding heavily infested areas or by supplemental feeding.

Livestock owners should practice good range management, and keep

hungry animals away from rubberweed ranges at all times. If sheep losses become excessive, it may be advisable to change from sheep to cattle on certain ranges.

There is no effective treatment for rubberweed poisoning, and eradication of the plant is not practicable.

### Where To Obtain More Information

You can obtain more detailed information on rubberweed poisoning by getting in touch with your county agricultural agent or by writing to your State agricultural experiment station or to the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Con-

sult your local veterinarian if you have any questions about affected animals. *Note:* The map on page 2 shows areas where most livestock poisoning has been reported. It is possible that rubberweed grows in other areas.

## Know Poisonous Plants • Reduce Livestock Losses

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